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BIG TIME ULTRON

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005

HEY, MY NAME'S ***ANDY MAGUIRE.*** AND THAT'S ME, AND THIS IS MY LIFE.

SEE, MY HIGH SCHOOL TOOK A FIELD TRIP TO ***HORIZON LABS,*** THIS NERD THINK TANK BACK HOME IN NEW YORK. ONE OF THE NERDS, SOME TIGHT-WAD NAMED ***PETER PARKER,*** RAN AN EXPERIMENT.

IT WENT WRONG, I GOT CAUGHT UP IN IT AND ***BOOM!*** I WAS A SUPER HERO. ***ALPHA.***

I COULD ONLY USE ***ONE*** POWER AT A ***TIME***. WHATEVER, I WAS ***FAMOUS!*** BUT THE POWERS BECAME TOO DANGEROUS.

SO PARKER AND SPIDER-MAN SHUT MY POWERS DOWN. MY MOM LEFT MY DAD AND WE MOVED TO MY GRANDMA'S IN PITTSBURGH.

NOW I'M THE LEAST POPULAR KID IN SCHOOL. ONLY A FEW NERDS EVEN SIT NEAR ME, INCLUDING SUSAN "*SOUPCAN*" RICE. SHE'S WEIRD. BUT SHE THINKS I'M CUTE. BUT SHE WON'T ADMIT IT; I ONLY KNOW IT BECAUSE I USED MY POWERS OT LISTEN IN ON HER CONVERSATIONS. *HUH*. MAKES ME SOUND LIKE A STALKER.

I CAN'T HELP IT, THOUGH. MY POWERS JUST LET ME "*SENSE*" WHAT'S GOING ON--IT AMPLIFIES THINGS. IT'S KIND OF EXHAUSTING, HONESTLY. I CAN'T PROTECT EVERYONE.

HECK, I CAN'T EVEN FIGURE OUT WHO'S BEEN BEHIND THE RASH OF ARSONS ACROSS TOWN, AND I CAN HEAR ***EVERYTHING.***

ANYWAY, I ACCIDENTALLY PUT THIS MUGGER IN THE HOSPITAL. HE'S BEEN IN A COMA, EXCEPT ONE TIME HE WOKE UP CLAIMING TO WANT ME DEAD. HE SOUNDED LIKE HE'D MUTATED.

I TRIED TO STOP HIM, BUT THEN I COULD HEAR MY MOM IN TROUBLE. SOMEONE BURNED OUR HOUSE DOWN, TRIED TO KILL HER.

SOMEONE WHO I'M GOING TO MAKE PAY.

HUMBERTO RAMOS & EDGAR DELGADO
COVER ART

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PITTSBURGH, PA.

PETER PARKER TOLD ME SOMETHING.

WITH GREAT *POWER* COMES GREAT *OPPORTUNITY*.

HE TOLD ME THAT IF I *COULD* DO *GREAT* THINGS, I SHOULD DO *GREAT* THINGS.

AND I FIGURED THAT WOULD MEAN THAT GREAT THINGS WOULD HAPPEN TO *ME*.

WHAT A LOAD OF *CRAP*.

AFTER I ABSORB THIS *FIRE*, MAKE SURE MY *FAMILY* IS *OKAY*, AND STOP THE *MONSTER* ACROSS TOWN, I'M TOTALLY GOING TO KICK SOMEBODY'S *ASS*...

BIG TIME!

JOSHUA HALE FIALKOV
WRITER

NUNO PLATI
ARTIST

VC'S JOE SABINO
LETTERER

TOM BRENNAN
EDITOR

STEPHEN WACKER
SENIOR EDITOR

AXEL ALONSO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

ALAN FINE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

I'VE BEEN A *SUPER HERO* FOR, LIKE, *SEVENTY-TWO* HOURS, AND SO FAR I'VE *CREATED* A *MONSTER*, BEEN TREATED LIKE A *CHUMP* BY THE *GIRL* I LIKE, AND, OH YEAH, *SOMEONE TRIED TO BURN MY HOUSE DOWN WITH MY FAMILY INSIDE IT.*

AT THIS RATE, I'LL NEVER BE...

MOM! GRANDMA!

ANDY! SHE'S NOT BREATHING!

TAKE HER TO THE HOSPITAL--

I...CAN'T. TRUST ME. I CAN FIX HER.

GASP!

OH GOD, HONEY...THANK YOU, THANK YOU SO MUCH--

I LOVE YOU, MOM--

I LOVE YOU, TOO, BABY--

WHO DID THIS?

I...I DON'T KNOW...

...THEY SAID "BOSS COHEN SAYS HELLO."

GOOD.

NOW I KNOW WHO'S *NEXT.*

NEXT FOR *WHAT?*

ANDY MAGUIRE, *DO NOT--*

DON'T WORRY, MOM.

I'M JUST GONNA HIT HIM REALLY, *REALLY* HARD.

I GUARANTEE THAT'LL BE *ENOUGH.*

I HAVE PLACES TO BE, CONSTRICTOR. JUST LET ME ARREST YOU--

I'M NOT A BAD GUY--

NEW YORK CITY

--ANYMORE.

UH. HELLO...?

PUT ME DOWN THIS INSTANT, ALPHA!

SORRY, SPIDER-MAN, I NEED YOU.

MAGUIRE, THIS IS NOT WHY I GAVE YOUR POWERS BACK!

YOU CAN'T JUST SHOW UP WHENEVER YOU WANT AND KIDNAP--

TURN AROUND.

ZETA HUNGERS!

ZETA CONSUMES!

ZETA MUST GROW!

WHAT IS THAT?!?

IT'S THIS MUGGER I ACCIDENTALLY TURNED INTO A WEIRD ABSORBY MONSTER THING.

DON'T TOUCH IT, SPIDER-MAN!

IT SEEMS UNSTABLE.

YOU DID THIS TO ME!

ME?

OOF!

ALPHA! KILL ALPHA! MUST DESTROY!

KA-THOOOOM

INCREDIBLE. HE'S MERGED WITH...HOW MANY PEOPLE?

THEY SAID HUNDREDS--

REMARKABLE!

KILL ALPHA AND HIS AMAZING FRIEND!

NOT AMAZING, NO--

SUPERIOR.

SMASH

...OUCH.

I'M GONNA THROW HIM INTO THE RIVER, GET HIM AWAY FROM HURTING ANYBODY--

YES. OF COURSE. PROTECT "*INNOCENTS.*"

I'D HESITATE TO DO *THAT*--LET ME CONSULT WITH PETER PARKER BACK IN NEW YORK FIRST--

TOO LATE, I'M DOING IT! I'M *LIFTING* HIM--

OH, *CRAP*...

I'M JUST GIVING HIM MORE JUICE!

ALPHA--USE YOUR *ENHANCED* SENSES FOR ME, AND DESCRIBE WHAT YOU SEE ON A *CELLULAR LEVEL*--

YOU MEAN, LIKE A CELL *PHONE?*

+SIGH+

LOOK AT HIM. REALLY, REALLY *HARD*.

UH...

OKAY.

THERE'S LIKE CIRCLES AND THEN LIKE, JAGGEDY THINGS.

INCREDIBLE.

I KNOW HOW TO KILL IT--

DUDE, THAT'S A *LOT* OF INNOCENT PEOPLE.

--

FINE.

I CAN SAVE THEM ALL.

YOU NEED TO USE YOUR POWERS TO *RADIATE* THE CELLS, CAUSE THE CORRUPTED CELLS TO *DIE*. CAN YOU DO THAT?

BUT ONLY THE CORRUPTED CELLS!

UH...

...COOL.

ALPHA... DO YOUR THING!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU'RE KILLING ME AGAAAAAIIIIIIIIN!

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

IT'S WORKING!

DID I DO IT?

SURPRISINGLY, YOU *DID*.

WHOA. WAIT, WHERE'S *ZETA*?

HE'S *GONE*. THE SUPER VILLAINS ALWAYS SEEM TO GET AWAY UNLESS YOU *SHOOT* THEM IN THE *HEAD* FIRST.

SO, HE'LL BE *BACK*?

THE GOOD ONES *ALWAYS* ARE.

THIS FEELS GOOD.

IT DOES DOESN'T IT? IT'S WEIRD.

YEAH, I WISH I'D KNOWN HOW GOOD BEING GOOD FELT. I WOULD'VE DONE IT SOONER.

OH NO, MOM! I FORGOT.

I HAVE TO GO.

RECORDER ON.

ALPHA OBSERVATION NUMBER 92. ALPHA'S POWERS WHEN USED IN CONCENTRATED FORM CAUSE CANCEROUS TISSUE TO FORM.

THIS MAKES TRANSFERENCE OF HIS POWERS TO *ME* TOO COMPLICATED.

"POTENTIALLY *FATAL.*"

ANDY, I DO NOT WANT YOU TO GO AFTER THIS GUY--

MOM, HE TRIED TO KILL YOU!

MOTEL 5
29 99 PER NIGHT

"WE'VE MADE A LOT OF *MISTAKES*, ANDY."

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE *GOOD GUY* NOW, AND THAT MEANS BEING THE BIGGER MAN.

MOM. HE. TRIED. TO. *KILL.* YOU.

BUT YOU SAVED ME.

YOU'RE MY HERO, ANDY.

THANKS, MOM. I STILL HAVE TO GO, THOUGH.

I'LL BE BACK IN A WHILE.

WHERE YOU GOING?

TO GO SEE SOMEBODY.

"A GIRL."

CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION

SOUPCAN! YOU'RE HERE.

UH. YEAH, I WORK HERE.

EAT & PARK
LARIMER EAST PITTSBURGH

BUT IT LIKE, Y'KNOW, *BURNED* DOWN...

I'M HELPING THEM FIX IT.

I SAW WHAT YOU DID AT THAT *HOSPITAL.*

YEAH?

IT WAS PRETTY *AWESOME.*

RIGHT? DID YOU SEE ME WITH *SPIDER-MAN?*

YEAH. *RIDONKULOUS.*

HEH.

I'M KIND OF A *SCREWUP.*

IT'S OKAY, *ANDY.*

YOU'RE DOING THE BEST YOU CAN, *RIGHT?*

YEAH. I LIKE SAVED A BUNCH OF *PEOPLE* AND *EVERYTHING*--

WELL, GOOD.

LOOK, I LIKE YOU. I DO. YOU'RE A DOOF.

BUT, I LIKE YOU.

I LIKE YOU, TOO.

MAYBE I COULD LIKE TAKE YOU FOR DINNER, OR A MOVIE, OR SOMETHING--

YEAH, SURE--

ONLY...I--I WANT TO CALL YOU SUSAN.

SOUPCAN IS...WEIRD.

MY MOM CALLED ME *SOUPCAN*.

WHEN I WAS LITTLE. AND, SHE, LIKE, *DIED*, SO, Y'KNOW, I *KEPT* IT--

IT *REMINDS* ME OF HER, *Y'KNOW?*

OH, I DIDN'T *KNOW*. I JUST THOUGHT--

THAT IT WAS CAUSE I HAD ALL SORTS OF *CRAP* THROUGH MY FACE?

BANG

NO. HAPPY COINCIDENCE.

NO.

YOU.

TELL BOSS COHEN...

HELLO!

SLAM

OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD.

I WAS JUST SHOT AT! I AM NOT OKAY!

ARE YOU OKAY?

SOON...

JIMMY, ALPHA JUST SHOWED UP.

I *FIGURED* HE WOULD.

YEAH? WAS *THIS* PART OF YOUR PLAN?

PLAN? WHAT PLAN? ONE OF MY *BOYS* GOES CRAZY AND SHOOTS AT A CHICK, AND I'M TO *BLAME?*

WHY SHOULDN'T I *KILL* YOU?

MY NAME IS *BOSS COHEN.*

I RUN THIS *CITY.*

AND YOU'VE BEEN IN MY *BUSINESS,* BOYCHICK.

I CAN GET TO EVERYBODY YOU *LOVE,* AND *WILL,* SO, I RECOMMEND YOU SIT DOWN AND TALK TO ME LIKE A *PROPER HUMAN BEING.*

NOW, YOU AND ME, WE'RE AT WHAT I CALL *CROSS-PURPOSES.*

WE NEED TO FIX THIS. THERE'S *PLENTY* OF OTHER CRIME YOU CAN STOP.

CRIME THAT DOESN'T COST *ME* MONEY.

SO, WHAT, JUST LET YOU DO WHATEVER YOU *WANT?*

DUDE, I'M A FREAKIN' *SUPER HERO.*

AND YOU'RE A *BAD GUY.*

I *AM* A BAD GUY. THAT'S A GOOD POINT.

BUT AS FOR YOU, I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU'RE *SUCH* A GOOD GUY.

IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF *THE PRESS,* OR, HECK, *THE AVENGERS,* FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS, *NO?*

NOT ONLY DID YOU ALMOST *KILL* A MAN, BUT YOU TURNED HIM INTO A MONSTER THAT NEARLY DESTROYED THE *CITY.*

AND HID IT FROM *EVERYONE.*

HERO.

I...I ALREADY TOLD *SPIDER-MAN--*

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *NEWSPAPERS?* WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?

WHAT ABOUT YOUR GIRLFRIEND?

"NOW, KID, NEXT TIME YOU SEE A *FIRE* OR ONE OF MY *BOYS*, YOU *STEER CLEAR*. OTHERWISE, THIS GOES TO THE *PRESS*."

AND, NOW, THIS *KILLS* ME, WHY WOULD THEY BUILD A *SURGERY* MACHINE THAT IS *ONLY CAPABLE* OF PERFORMING SURGERY ON *ONE* SEX--

HEY, *KILGORE*--

YEAH?

I'M *ALPHA*.

UH, YEAH, I *KNOW*.

DO YOU WANT TO LIKE, BE MY *CONFIDANT* GUY?

I THOUGHT I ALREADY *WAS*.

WHAT HAPPENED WITH SOUPCAN? WHY SHE OVER *THERE*?

THAT'S JUST ONE OF LIKE A *DOZEN* THINGS I DID WRONG.

WRONG?

I'M A *LAME* SUPER HERO, MAN.

BULLCRAP, MAN.

YOU SAVED ALL THOSE *PEOPLE*, AND PUT OUT THE *FIRES*, AND Y'KNOW, DID ALL *SORTS* OF COOL STUFF.

IF YOU ASK ME, YOU'RE NOT *LAME*, MAN...

YOU'RE *BIG TIME*.

THANKS, KILGORE. YOU'RE *COOL*, TOO.

OH, I DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE *COOL*.

...

I'M *GOING* FLYING.

AND, WELL, THAT'S WHERE WE *ARE*.

I'VE GOT A *FRIEND*, MY MOM'S NOT A *DEPRESSIVE* ANYMORE, AND I'M THE, LIKE, *PROTECTOR* OF PITTSBURGH.

EXCEPT, IF I TRY TO FIGHT *CRIME* IN PITTSBURGH, SOME ONE-EYED LUNATIC WILL KILL EVERYONE I *LOVE*.

AND I'M TECHNICALLY *HOMELESS*--

OH YEAH, AND THE GIRL I LOVE IS SCARED TO *DEATH* OF BEING NEAR ME--

BUT, OTHER THAN *THAT*--

EVERYTHING IS COMING UP ANDY.

THIS SUPER HERO THING *COULD WORK OUT*...

I WONDER WHAT THOR'S DOING RIGHT NOW...

THE END...FOR NOW!

ALPHA MAIL

TOM BRENNAN
EDITOR
JOE QUESADA
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER
STEPHEN WACKER
SENIOR EDITOR
DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER
AXEL ALONSO
EDITOR IN CHIEF
ALAN FINE
EXEC. PRODUCER

Send e-mail to
SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM
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And so, the end is here. Andy has become a dear friend to all of us on this book, and, hopefully to a few of you, too. Okay, maybe not *"dear friend."* How about...less of a jerk? Can we settle on that?

Every month, no matter how stressed out or down in the dumps, ***ALPHA*** has been a refuge, and, an absolute joy. I hope you guys got even an iota of the same pleasure reading it that I got making it.

This book is a tribute to Dan Slott and Humberto Ramos's wonderful work on Spider-Man the past few years, as well as the Spider-Office's commitment to making a different kind of comic. Working with Nuno, Tom, and Joe on this book has been an absolute joy.

Oh, and I should add...This is not the end of Alpha. That'll be in Amazing Spider-Man 800 when he mind swaps with Ben Reilly.

Stay tuned, folks, and thanks so much for reading,

Joshua Hale Fialkov
North Hollywood, CA

ZONE